

ANIMALS - PLOVERS

Baby birds bop along beach

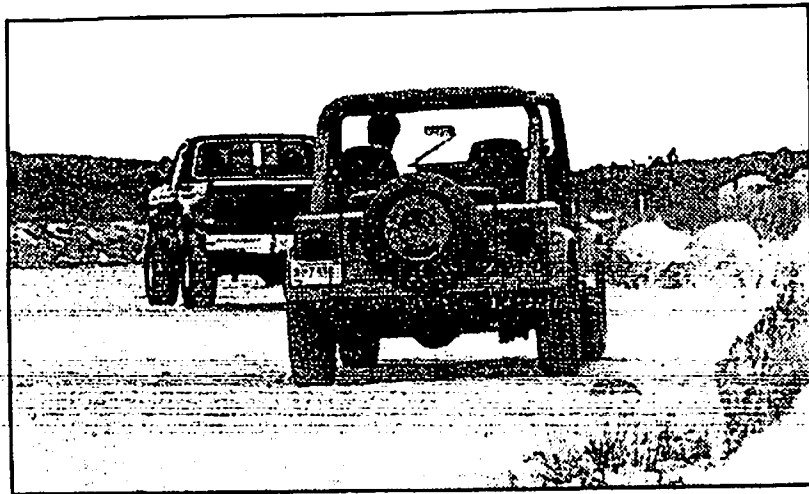
Vehicle access depends on where they decide to go

By Tamson W. Burgess
MPG Newspapers

PLYMOUTH — The piping plover chicks on the beach are keeping beach monitors busy.

The oldest brood, which hatched from a nest near the crossover, keep moving around the beach. When they come back near the area where vehicles are allowed, the beach is shut off to four-wheel-drives. When the birds wander back up the beach, the gate restrictions can be loosened, natural resource officer Rick Souza said this week.

The Saturday three chicks hatched from a nest near privately owned cottages and a fishing site and parking spot for fishermen. Cottage owners are still allowed to drive to their property, but have been warned that they, not the town, are responsible if they harm any bird or its habitat. Fishermen cannot drive to the parking lot or the fishing hole, but may walk in to fish there. Souza has this brood under close observation. If they move to another area the restrictions could be re-



File photo

Plymouth Beach — Vehicle access is limited, but not totally banned.

duced or removed completely.

Two plover nests on the beach were abandoned this week. One abandonment is suspected to have been tied to the weekend storm. The second is probably due to an aggressive territorial pair nesting nearby, Souza said. One of those nests was close to the crossover and was likely to cause additional vehicle restrictions, which are obviously no longer expected.

Two more nests with eggs have been discovered, keeping the total on the beach at 10.

This past weekend marked the

official summer opening of the beach with parking attendants now on site collecting fees and keeping count of the vehicles using the beach. Souza reports that even though the crossover was open to those who wanted to park on the beach south of the pass through both Saturday and Sunday, only five vehicles ventured past Manter's Point on Saturday and none passed through the crossover onto the beach. On Sunday 10 cars went traveled out the Long Beach road but only five actually drove onto the beach.